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SCIENCE

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EINSTEIN'S LAW OF GRAVITATION¹

THE by-laws of our society make it one of the duties of its president to deliver an address before its members. This fact renders it necessary for the president to select a subject; and this year the selection is to a certain degree forced by the public press. When a daily newspaper considers Einstein's work on gravitation a topic of sufficiently general interest to devote to it valuable space and cable funds, surely here is justification for my selection of this as the subject of my presidential address.

Einstein's original memoirs upon gravitation appeared in the years 1916 to 1918; and there are two excellent papers in English expounding and explaining his method, one by Professor deSitter, of Leyden, and one by Professor Eddington, of Cambridge. While Einstein's work may be known to many of you either in its original form or in one of the two papers mentioned, I fear that the attention of most of us was first directed seriously to the matter by the articles in the newspapers to which I have referred. I confess that I was one of those who had postponed any serious study of the subject, until its immense importance was borne in upon me by the results of the recent eclipse expedition. I have all the enthusiasm of the discoverer of a new land, and feel compelled to describe to you what I have learned.

Albert Einstein, although now a resident of Berlin and holder of a research professorship of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, is legally a Swiss. He is forty-five years old and was for some time a professor in the Zurich Technical School, and later in the University of Prague. He is a man of liberal tendencies, and apparently one whom any of

¹ Presidential address delivered at the St. Louis meeting of the Physical Society, December 30, 1919.